

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,

I am greatly dismayed by the lack of informative television programming, and the state of what television producers call "news".

There is practically no local public affairs programming: it consists of less than one half of 1% of all local programming. Unbelievably, more than half of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story.

Without rigorous election reporting, we cannot have an informed electorate, and our democracy is at serious risk. As a result of this neglect of even the most basic election news, many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues.

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC must define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, I believe broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day. This should not be fulfilled with partisan, error-laden talk shows like those on Fox. The substantive election coverage must be on major networks and strive for impartiality, not just read off the talking points from a political party.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Sincerely,

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